

Romans 16 - Importance of Relationships

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Romans 16

- (3) Recommendation of Phoebe (16:1-2)

Newell, a Bible scholar, in his commentary on Romans says this of Romans 16: "The 16th chapter is neglected by many to their own loss. It is by far the most extensive, intimate, and particular of all the words of love and greeting in all of Paul's letters. No one can afford to miss this wonderful outpouring of the heart of our Apostle towards the saints that he so loved."

- (A) Paul's commendation (16:1a)
- (B) Phoebe's role (16:1b)

1 I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at **Cenchrea**,

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

1 Now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea.

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

- Paul recommends Phoebe to the church at Rome

- "...servant" - *diakonos*, where we get the term "deacon"; a servant was the highest calling of a follower of Christ (Cf. Mark 10:45)

- The word here is most likely used in an unofficial sense, not referring to a specific office that Phoebe held, but as a helper (Cf. Ryrie; NET Bible footnote)
- Lest you think that God has a lower view of women than men, see Women and Ministry for a complete list of how God has used women throughout Scripture, ever since Creation.
- "...Cenchrea" - the eastern port of Corinth
- Phoebe was dispatched from this port to Rome to deliver this letter from Paul to the church in Rome

(C) Paul urges the church to accept her (16:2a)

(D) Phoebe's past performance (16:2b)

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

2 Welcome her in the Lord as is appropriate for saints, and provide her with anything she may need from you, for she has assisted many people, including me.

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

- Paul's instruction to the church at Rome is that once Phoebe delivers this letter from Paul to you, help her in whatever she needs: if it's finances, give her money; if it's some other type of support, support her. Give her what she needs; bless her.

- What if Phoebe would not have fulfilled her mission of delivering this letter to the church at Rome? Dan Wallace, a Greek scholar, said: "Romans stands behind virtually all great movements of God in the last 1900 years."

— If you don't have the Book of Romans in your Bible, the spiritual state of the world over the past 1900 years would be drastically changed

— We would understand much less about salvation, we wouldn't have had the Protestant Reformation, we would have not had all of the great movements of God/revivals over the past 1900 years of history.

— We give Paul all the credit for writing the book, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but if you don't have Phoebe, you don't have a Book of Romans...it goes nowhere, it has no influence

— This is important because God has called all of us to play a role in the body of Christ, the Church. Some roles are visible, most are less visible. And the people who have the less visible roles can sometimes get the idea that their job is not important (Cf. 1 Cor 12:22-23).

— If you don't have people doing behind-the-scenes work, ministry will not go forward

- Phoebe was given the critical task of delivering this letter because of her past performance
- She has a track record of servanthood for many people, including Paul himself. We can look at her past service and know that she is faithful, thus I can assign this critical task of delivering this epistle to you.
- Phoebe had been tested, and had proven herself faithful (Cf. 2 Cor 8:22). Paul tells Timothy to not trust critical tasks within the church to anyone who has not proven faithful (1 Tim 5:22).
- He who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much (Luke 16:10). The Bible teaches to not despise the days of small beginnings. Allow the Holy Spirit to entrust you with minor things, or things that may seem minor to you. Prove yourself faithful in those things, then watch over time how God will promote you to larger and larger things.
- Joseph didn't just wake up one morning second in command in Egypt...his life was tested and he was faithful, over and over again. He was faithful in Potiphar's house (Gen 39), he was faithful in prison, and finally the day arose when Joseph was appointed second in command over all of Egypt.
- David did not wake up one day as the greatest king of Israel...he was first faithful in the small things, out tending the sheep. When Samuel came to select/anoint the next king, David's father didn't even call him in to see Samuel. Yet is David, after years of being faithful to God in the small things, that David was anointed as Israel's greatest king and blessed by God.

Like Phoebe, every person in the Church performs valuable tasks in God's plan of redemptive history. These tasks are often simple, ordinary or even mundane, but these tasks please God. When our motive is to glorify God, everything we do holds eternal significance.

(4) Greetings to various saints (16:3-16)

Preliminary comments on 16:3-16:

1. Paul calls out 29 people for commendation, 10 of whom are women whom Paul greets or addresses directly.
2. Paul was a "people person." We often look at Paul as all business, all about accomplishing objectives/goals, yet here we find Paul addressing people in a very personal way. The love that Paul has for people spills out in these verses.
3. Paul never makes reference to Peter in this passage. Ok, so what? Well, Roman Catholicism holds Peter up as the first pope. But if Peter was in Rome, serving at this time as the first pope, why didn't Paul send greetings to him?

- In fact, Paul says many times in Romans that he wanted to visit them and impart some spiritual gift to them. But why would Paul need to do that if Peter was already in Rome? Wouldn't Peter, the lead Apostle, be able to do this for the Roman church if he was already there?
- Paul also says that his philosophy of ministry is to take the gospel to those who haven't heard it, and never to build on another man's foundation (Cf. 15:20). This would be a very strange thing to say if Peter was already in Rome.
- Paul would later be imprisoned in Rome and write his final epistle, 2 Timothy (67 AD). In that epistle, he never mentioned Peter (because Peter was never in Rome, he was in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). In fact, it is documented that the evidence of Peter's presence in Rome and his bishophood and martyrdom there, had it's beginning more than 100 years after the apostle's execution. All of this "evidence" of Peter's presence and martyrdom in Rome doesn't even come up until more than a century after his death.

(A) Priscila and Aquila (16:3-5a)

3 Greet **Prisca and Aquila**, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me for the Messiah Jesus,

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

- "...Prisca and Aquila" - a husband and wife team who were very involved in Paul's ministry

— In Acts 18:26, they pulled Apollos aside to "explain the way of God more accurately to him." Evidently Apollos' doctrine was skewed a bit, so Prisca and Aquila took it upon themselves to get him on the right track.

— There is such a thing as synergy...the idea that all parts/people working together are more than the sum of their parts individually. That is how God used Prisca and Aquila as a husband and wife team, to multiply productivity and multiply effectiveness.

4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

4 and who risked their necks for my life. I am thankful to them, and so are all the churches among the gentiles.

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

- Evidently, at some point in time, Prisca and Aquila risked their own lives to save Paul. We don't have a record of this event, but Paul recounts it here in praise to this husband and

wife team.

(B) Epaphroditus (16:5b)

5 also *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

5 also *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

5 Greet also the church in their house. Greet my dear friend Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to the Messiah in Asia.

5 Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

- At the time of Paul's letter, Prisca and Aquila were hosting a home group (Cf. 1 Cor 16:19). This is how church was done in the mid-1st century. There were no churches for corporate worship *per se*, the church of Rome met in various homes.

— Other references to home churches in the NT are found in Col 4:15; Philemon 2

- Paul went to Asia on his third missionary journey and had a tremendous ministry

— In Acts 19:10 it describes how Paul began to lecture in a hall called the School of Tyrannus for two years, and all who lived in Asia heard the Word of the Lord

— Epaphroditus had sentimental value in Paul's mind because he was the first believer in Asia

There is no decisive evidence until the third century of the existence of special buildings used for churches. The references seem all to be places in private houses, likely houses of large size.

(C) Mary (16:6)

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

- In this passage, Paul commends four people for working hard: Mary (v6) and three others (v12). Each of the four are women.

— Those shouldering the load and bearing the burdens of ministry were all females

(D) Andronicus and Junias (16:7)

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my **kinsfolk** and my **fellowprisoners**, who are outstanding in the view of the **apostles**, who also were in Christ before me.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who are in prison with me and are prominent among the apostles. They belonged to the Messiah before I did.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

- "...kinsfolk" - fellow Jews

- "...fellow prisoners" - they also suffered in prison with Paul, who was imprisoned many times (2 Cor 11:23) and evidently Andronicus and Junia were imprisoned with him at least once. Thus, Paul has a special fondness for them since they shared in his sufferings.

- "...apostles" - used two ways in Scripture:

- If used in the technical sense, it would refer to one of the 12 apostles or Paul (requirements for being an apostle are found in Acts 1:21-22)
- If used in the non-technical sense, it means "sent one" thus could refer to anyone whom God has called to preach the gospel; a common missionary. Barnabas was called an "apostle" (non-technical sense) in Acts 14:14.

— So Paul is either saying that Andronicus and Junia are viewed very favorably by the 12 apostles, or he's saying that they are missionaries for the gospel

(E) Ampliatus (16:8)

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

8 Greet Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord.

- Of all the people Paul met and loved, he specifically called out Ampliatus for special recognition

— We don't know why because Paul doesn't give us a reason, but Paul loved him enough to mention his name specifically to the Roman church

(F) Urbanus and Stachys (16:9)

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in the Messiah, and my dear friend Stachys.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

(G) Apelles and Aristobolus (16:10)

10 Greet Apelles, the **approved** in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.

10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.

10 Greet Apelles, who has been approved by the Messiah. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.

- "...approved" - *dokimos*, has the idea of being tested, proven faithful, then rewarded

— This is also God's program for us...we are being tested every day; every day in some circumstance or some interaction, God asks you the question "Will you trust Me?"

— If you are in the midst of a trial right now in any type of circumstance, whether it be relationally, financially, or physically, you are being tested right now by God in terms of your faithfulness. And as you prove yourself to be faithful, God will reward you.

— Hopefully, we are found faithful in those tests, and at some point later in life or more likely the next life, we will be rewarded for our faithfulness (Cf. James 1:12)

— Apelles is the only person in this passage whom Paul labels as "approved"

(H) Herodion and Naccissus (16:11)

11 Greet **Herodion**, my kinsman. Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

11 Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those in the family of Narcissus, who belong to the Lord.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

- "...Herodion" - most scholars understand him to be a descendant of Herod

- Apparently some of the household of Narcissus were saved and others were not; Paul restricts his blessing and mention to those of his family who were in Christ

(I) Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis (16:12)

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who have worked hard for the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has toiled diligently for the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

- These are the other three women whom Paul calls out as working hard for the Lord (Cf. Mary, v6)

— The work that they were doing was "in the Lord" meaning it was inspired and powered by the Lord, not their own desires (Zech 4:6)

— If you are out to do great things for God without the enablement of the Holy Spirit, its just a matter of time before you become fatigued, frustrated, and depressed. But when we do God's work in God's way, we begin to see great results.

(J) Rufus (16:13)

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

13 Greet Rufus, the one chosen by the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

- It is possible that this Rufus is the same as the son of Simon the Cyrene, who was called upon to help Jesus carry His cross (Mark 15:21)

(K) Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas (16:14)

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers *and sisters* with them.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

- Another home church?

(L) Philologus, Julia, Nereus, a sister, Olympas (16:15)

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints who are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

(M) Exhortation and greeting from all the churches (16:16)

16 Greet one another with a **holykiss**. All the churches of Christ greet you.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of the Messiah greet you.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

- "...holy kiss" - in the ANE, kissing was a cultural way to show affection; akin to a handshake today

— Paul is not telling us to repeat eastern customs in a western culture, but rather he's telling us culturally to love one another from the heart

— Loving one another in Christ is a way the world can recognize that God's Word is true (John 13:35)

(5) Warning against false teachers (16:17-20)

(A) False teachers' characteristics (16:17)

(a) "urge"

(b) "brethren"

(c) "keep your eye on those who"

(d) "dissensions"

(e) "hindrances"

(f) "contrary to the teaching which you learned"

(g) "turn away from them"

17 Now I **urge** you, **brothers and sisters**, **keep your eye on those who** cause **dissensions** and **hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned**, and **turn away from them**.

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

17 Now I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create divisions and sinful enticements that oppose the teaching you have learned. Stay away from them,

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

- Paul now devotes a few verses, at the very end of his letter, to false teachers...

— Paul does this because if false teachers were able to convince Paul's readers against anything that Paul wrote in this letter, his work in writing the letter would be in vain

— Paul has divulged a tremendous amount of doctrinal truth in this letter, but if a false teacher were to come along after the letter was delivered and contradict what Paul said here, it would undermine all of Paul's work

— Quite frankly, there are few things more relevant to study in the Bible than false teachers. The issue of false teachers is more relevant today than at any time in history. There are not fewer false teachers around today, the numbers are not dropping, they are exploding (Cf. 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:13; 1 John 4:1).

- There are seven words or phrases in this verse that, if understood properly, increase our understanding of false teachers:

- "...urge" - *parakaleō*, an exhortation of a very strong order; this is the opposite of a "tip" or a "suggestion"...it's a very strong exhortation alerting you to a reality (false teachers)
- "...brothers *and sisters*" - brethren; indicates that Paul's original audience was believers
- This indicates that someone who is a blood-bought saint and headed for heaven can be deceived by false teachers
- Many people have the view that we have the mind of Christ once we become believers, so we can't be deceived. If that was true, why would Paul *parakaleō* these believers to watch out for false teachers?
- If you don't believe a Christian can be deceived by false teaching, you are deceived by false teaching. Peter was deceived not once, but at least twice, on cornerstone Christian doctrines (Cf. Matt 16:21-23, where he was deceived about the cross; see Gal 2:11-14 and notes there, where he was deceived about grace).
- There is no such thing as a Christian whose mind is insulated or impervious to spiritual deception. In fact, it's not hard to argue that the body of Christ is more deceived today than at any other time in church history (Cf. Gal 1:6-9).
- Why would Paul tell us in Eph 6 to put on the armor of God, specifically the helmet of salvation, if our minds could not be deceived in some way?
- "...keep your eye on those who" - watch out, closely monitor; Paul is saying that we need to be active out this, not passive
- "...dissensions" - false teachers bring into the body of Christ divisions. These are not tiffs among Christians; Paul is saying that these false teachers will cause divisions and disagreements because they introduce non-apostolic doctrines (unbiblical teaching) into the church.
- The moment you bring in unbiblical doctrine into the church, is the moment you have dissension because there are people who will follow the unbiblical doctrine and those who will want to remain loyal to apostolic teaching
- "...hindrances" - *skandalon*, something that stumbles you; a stumbling block that thwarts the growth and maturity of the believer
- False teaching cannot take away your justification in Christ if you're already saved, but it can thwart your growth/sanctification in Christ
- "...contrary to the teaching which you learned" - false teaching is a problem because it's going to lead you away from truth, into believing a falsehood
- "...turn away from them" - don't give these false teachers or their false doctrine influence over your thoughts and mind; don't allow them to dictate how you think or what you believe
- This is the idea of ecclesiastical separation (see notes on 2 Thess 3:6)

(B) Paul's reason for the warning (16:18)

(a) Their master (16:18a)

(b) Their deception (16:18b)

18 For **such people** are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of **their own appetites**; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

18 because such people are not serving the Messiah our Lord, but their own desires. By their smooth talk and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

- "...such people" - false teachers

- "...their own appetites" - classic characteristic of a false teacher is someone who wants to use/exploit the flock of God for their own purposes (Cf. Phil 3:19)

— Their minds are on earthly things, the things of man, not heavenly things; they are more concerned about fleecing the flock rather than feeding the flock (Cf. Ezek 34:2-3)

— They are not serving Christ, but rather are "slaves" to themselves and their own self-interest

- "...smooth" - *chrēstologia*, "the smooth and plausible address which *simulates* goodness"

- "...flattering" - *eulogia*, *eu* = good; *logia* = words; these false teachers are going to utter "good words"; they are going to say things that are pleasing to your ears; they will have "polished language"; "language artfully adapted to captivate the hearer"

— They aren't going to tell you what you *need* to hear, but they are experts in telling you what you *want* to hear. Tragically, these false teachers are predicted by Paul to be prevalent in the last days of the church (2 Tim 4:3-4).

— Paul says that these false teachers will come, especially in the last days, develop massive followings because they will tell people in their carnal, rebellious, sinful state exactly what they want to hear. You want to focus on material things? Go ahead. You want salvation by works? Go ahead. You want to live licentiously, with no accountability? Go ahead.

— It's not too much further away that the church will no longer put up with sound doctrine

— One of the least known prophets in the OT is Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8). King Ahab had called in Jehoshaphat for counsel. Jehoshaphat asked Ahab if there were any prophets of the Lord remaining, so they could get further counsel. Ahab said, Yes, there is one, Micaiah, but I hate him because he always prophesies the bad (truth), never the good. There were many prophets in the kingdom whom they could have inquired, but there is this one prophet, Micaiah, who always spoke the truth, so Ahab hated him because he didn't want to hear the truth.

— It's akin to a doctor who views your test results or your x-ray and saw something negative on it, but to make you feel better about yourself, he doesn't tell you what was

negative on the x-ray. Think of the insanity of that? That doctor would be sued immediately for malpractice. But that's exactly what is happening all around this country, in both churches and so-called Christian ministries, where people come to hear not what they need to hear, but what they want to hear. If you did that in medicine, you'd be sued. If you did that in law, you'd be disbarred. But for some reason people have this idea that it's ok to do it in church, where you're not talking about temporal things, but eternal things. Our standard in churches should be higher than medicine or law because we're dealing with eternal things, we are dealing with heaven and hell, where someone will spend eternity, so we should not somehow think that the standard for us should be lower than worldly professions.

- "...speech" - Paul calls specific attention to how they speak...they talk a great game

- The Bible how the ultimately false teacher, the coming Antichrist, will use his words and oratory to deceive the world, and deceive even the "elect" (Jews) (Cf. Dan 7:8,11,25; 11:36-38; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5)

- Paul here is referring to "little antichrists" who are imitating the future Antichrist in the manner in which they speak

- "...hearts" - these false teachers will go straight for your heart (Cf. Prov 4:23 [KJV]); if you look at how Christ dealt with the Pharisees in the Sermon on the Mount, it was all about the heart...it's not just physical adultery that is the problem, but also the adultery that has already taken place in your heart. Physical murder is not the only problem, it's also the hatred you have for someone in your heart.

- "...unsuspecting" - the naive, those not familiar with apostolic doctrine; those who are not rooted and grounded in Scriptural truth

- This is why you'll see the kingdom of the cults outside of a Franklin Graham crusade, a Harvest (Greg Laurie) Crusade, or an event by Luis Palau...because they prey on the unsuspecting. Many people come to Christ at these events, but they are ignorant of apostolic teaching, of Scriptural truths, so the kingdom of the cults comes in with a verse or two to hook these unsuspecting infant believers into their abhorrent and heretical beliefs.

- The cults thrive on those who believe the Bible is true, but don't know what the Bible says

(C) Paul's optimism concerning his audience (16:19)

- (a) Their maturity (16:19a)

- (b) Exhortation toward continued wisdom (16:19b)

19 For the report of your obedience has reached everyone; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

19 For your obedience has become known to everyone, and I am full of joy for you. But I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

- Some optimism now...Paul did not believe that the church at Rome would be sucked into false teaching

- Earlier in this letter (15:14), Paul was convinced in the spiritual maturity of this church; Paul looked at the church at Rome and saw evidence of their spiritual growth and maturity — Because they were growing and maturing, they were less susceptible to false teaching; they were not the "unsuspecting" (v18). The more a believer grows and matures in Christ, the more they are familiar with the "original" the less they will be susceptible to the counterfeit.

- But if you are not familiar with the Bible, if it's only something you bring out 2-3 times a year, or maybe once a week to go to church, you are a sitting duck for false teaching

- One of the evidences that Paul cites to conclude they were maturing was their obedience, and the fact that their obedience was well-known ("reached everyone")

- Our nation (and the world) is just the opposite...it is developing superior wisdom in what is evil, and it is ignorant of what is good

- We are becoming more and more knowledgeable about evil, and more and more naive about what is good

- How many 12th graders do you know who can recite the 10 Commandments? How many can recite 5 books of the Bible? But how many know they can buy weed? How many know where they can get an abortion?

- Paul says to go the opposite way...develop wisdom in the things that are book, and no nothing, be completely ignorant of the things that are evil

- Paul wants the church to go back to innocence, back to a time when we knew nothing of evil. He wants us to go back to a pre-Fall state (Gen 2:16-17; 3:22). The human race started out knowing nothing about evil, then with the Fall we became knowledgeable about evil. Paul wants us to go in the opposite direction that the culture is going.

(6) Promise of ultimate victory (16:20)

(a) Satan's defeat (16:20a)

(b) Grace availability in the meantime (16:20b)

20 The **God of peace will soon crush Satan** under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be with all of you!

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

- Paul tells the Roman church that because of their allegiance and belief in Christ, they are on the winning side of history

— It doesn't matter how they feel, or what their circumstances were, one day God will crush Satan under their feet

— What is promised here is that Satan is a defeated enemy, he is on his way out. The clock is ticking on his ultimate demise.

— But how could Satan be a defeated enemy when we have verses such as John 12:31; 16:11 which clearly call Satan the ruler of this world? Or 2 Cor 4:4, which specifically calls Satan the god of this world? How could a being who is running the entire world system be a defeated foe?

— Satan has been convicted, but not yet deposed; he was found guilty and defeated at the cross, but the sentencing/penalty phase of the trial has not yet taken place

— Understanding Satan's Progressive Defeat (see chart below) along with the fact that Satan has been found guilty, and is awaiting the sentencing/penalty phase of his trial, is how you can reconcile 16:20 with John 12:31; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4 and all the other passages that describe Satan or his deeds.

— You can also look at the reign of Saul...as of 1 Sam 16, Saul was no longer God's choice to be king of Israel, and Samuel anointed David as God's king. Saul remained on the throne, even though his authority was not granted by God. So from 1 Sam 16-31, people had to make a choice whether they were going to follow Saul or follow God's choice of king, David. Would they walk by sight and continue to follow Saul, who had the political authority, or would they walk by faith and follow David, who was God's anointed choice to be king. Most of the nation followed Saul, but a small remnant followed David. People have to make the same decision today...are you going to follow Satan, the defeated but not yet sentenced prince and power of the air, ruler of the world, or are you by faith trusting in Jesus Christ, the choice of God the Father but who is not yet ruling on the throne, but one day will be?

- "...God of peace will soon crush Satan" - this is an oxymoron, it states two contradictory facts. How can a God of peace "crush" Satan? Isn't the act of crushing the opposite of peace?

— To understand this, you have to understand the millennial kingdom...the kingdom of God will be a kingdom of peace, but peace cannot exist until the adversary is cast out (Cf. Is

9:7). So the crushing of Satan must take place before the God of peace brings in His kingdom to the earth. It is impossible to have peace if Satan is present.

— "soon" - when is this event of God crushing Satan going to happen? When are events #5, #6, and #7 of Satan's defeat going to take place?

— Paul says "soon"—but it's been 2000 years since he wrote Romans, and it still hasn't happened yet

— The Greek word translated "soon" is *tachos*, which can have different meanings depending on the context:

1. Sometimes *tachos* is used in a chronological sense indicating *when* (1 Tim 3:14)
2. Sometimes *tachos* is used not to describe *when*, but *how* something will take place (i.e. an adverb); the manner in which something will take place

— Paul uses the 2nd meaning of *tachos* here, not referring to *when* Satan will be crushed, but *how* he will be crushed. He is saying that when Satan is crushed, it will happen suddenly, very rapidly.

— It's not a prediction of a date (even though we'd love to have a date for this event)...Paul is saying that when Satan is crushed, it will come upon him like a ton of bricks, very quickly and suddenly; it won't be a long, drawn out process, but rather will be over in a moment.

— Rev 18:10,19 says that the judgment of Babylon, the world system, will take place in "one hour." The entire world system will be brought to the ground in just 60 minutes!

- In the meantime, while we're waiting for the God of peace to crush Satan, while we're waiting for defeat #5, #6, and #7 to take place, God's grace is available

Satan's Progressive Defeat

1. Initial eviction from heaven (Is 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17)
2. Eden (Gen 3:15)
3. Pre-Diluvian World (Gen 6; 2 Peter 3:19-20; Jude 6-7)
4. Cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8)
5. Midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev 12:9)
6. Beginning of the millennium (Rev 20:2-3)
7. End of the millennium (Rev 20:10)

(7) Greetings from companions (16:21-24)

(A) Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (16:21)

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, and so *do* **Lucius**, **Jason**, and **Sosipater**, my kinsmen.

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so *do* Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

21 Timothy my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

- Paul is now sending a greeting from those who are with him in Corinth, to his recipients in Rome

— In v3-16, Paul sent greeting to the believers in Rome; in v21-23, he sends greetings from those who are with him in Corinth to the recipients of the letter in Rome

- "Timothy" - a close companion with Paul in his missionary journeys; he would one day become the pastor at Ephesus, and Paul would later write him two letters (1 Timothy & 2 Timothy)

- "...Lucius" - this is likely Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts

— Luke was likely with Paul in Corinth during his 3rd missionary journey (Acts 18:23—21:15); most of this span is covered by one of the "we" sections in Acts (see note below), indicating that Luke was present with Paul during those times.

— In 2 Tim 4:11 we learn that Luke was with Paul during his final imprisonment

— Why is this important? It's important because every book of the NT was written by one of the 12 apostles, or someone very close to an apostle. Luke was not an apostle, he didn't witness the death and resurrection of Christ. He says early on in his gospel (Luke 1:1-2) that he compiled his gospel based on interviewing eyewitnesses.

— So how can we accept Luke and Acts as canonical? Because Paul authenticated Luke, and Luke spent a significant amount of time with Paul.

— One of the tests used by the early church to determine which books would be included in the canon of Scripture was "apostolicity" meaning that the book/letter had to either been written by one of the original 12 apostles (or Paul, who was also an apostle), or the book and author had to be authenticated by an apostle.

— Paul did not become an apostle until Acts 9, but Peter authenticated Paul (2 Peter 3:15); Luke was never an apostle, but Paul authenticated Luke.

- "...Jason" - Paul's host in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9)

- "...Sosipater" - accompanied Paul as he left Greece at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4)

"We" Sections in Acts

- Acts 16:10-40
- Acts 20:5—21:18
- Acts 27:1—28:16

(B) Tertius (16:22)

22 I, **Tertius**, who have written this letter, greet you in the Lord.

22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

22 I, Tertius, who penned this letter, greet you in the Lord.

22 I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

- "...Tertius" - a scribe or stenographer who wrote down what Paul spoke verbally, resulting in this letter

— Peter also had a scribe, Silvanus (1 Peter 5:13)

— Like Phoebe who delivered this letter to Rome (Cf. v1-2), Tertius was a behind-the-scenes hero who was instrumental in getting the epistle to the Romans on paper

— This is important because God has called all of us to play a role in the body of Christ, the Church. Some roles are visible, most are less visible. And the people who have the less visible roles can sometimes get the idea that their job is not important (Cf. 1 Cor 12:22-23).

(C) Gaius, Quartus, Erastus (16:23)

23 **Gaius**, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. **Erastus**, the city treasurer, greets you, and **Quartus**, the brother.

23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

23 Gaius, who is host to me and the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you.

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

- "Gaius" - one of the few people who Paul baptized (1 Cor 1:14-17)

- "...Erastus" - archaeological discoveries in Corinth have authenticated the existence of Erastus (see below)

- "...Quartus" - Paul's spiritual brother (Cf. Matt 12:48-50)



In 1929, among the excavated ruins of ancient Corinth was discovered an inscription on a marble paving stone bearing the name of Erastus. The inscription read: **ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT**, which is an abbreviation of **ERASTUS PRO AEDILITATE SUA PECUNIA STRAVIT**. The inscription translates as "Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense." The office of aedilis was the commissioner of public works and, for this reason, a high ranking public official belonging to the Roman ruling class in a city. Paul mentions an Erastus from Corinth in Rom 16:23 and identifies him as "the city treasurer" (*oikonomos*).

24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

24 May the grace of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be with all of you!

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

(8) Benediction (16:25-27)

(A) Description of the gospel (16:25a)

(B) "Mystery" (16:25b-26a)

25 Now to Him who is able to **establish** you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery** which has been kept secret for long ages past,

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

25 Now to the one who is able to strengthen you with my gospel and the message that I preach about Jesus, the Messiah, by revealing the secret that was kept hidden from long ago

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

- "...establish" - *stērizō*, to make stable, place firmly, set fast, affix (Cf. 1:11)

— The gospel has the authority and power to "establish" a soul; it has the sufficient information within it, as revealed by God, whereby if we trust in its message we are able to stand innocent before God

- "...mystery" - *mystērion*, in the NT, *mystērion* denotes, not the mysterious (as with the English word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words]

— Contrary to the English definition, which is something that is obscure and must be searched out, the Greek definition means much the opposite: something that was unknown in the past (impossible to figure out without divine revelation) but now is revealed or fully disclosed.

— There are many "mysteries" in the Bible...things that were not mentioned and unknown in the OT that are now revealed in full disclosure in the NT (see note: **NT Mysteries** below)

— The plan of salvation is never a mystery in Scripture...it began to be revealed in Gen 3:15 and was then progressively revealed throughout Scripture

— The mystery that Paul is referring to here is the mystery that during the Church Age, Jews and Gentiles who put their faith in Jesus Christ are brought together into one new man called the church. Every person has equal status in the body of Christ, and any race-based distinction between Jews and Gentiles are gone.

NT Mysteries

- Kingdom mysteries (Matt 13:11)
- Mystery of the seven stars and seven lampstands (Rev 1:20)
- Mystery of the Body of Christ (Eph 3:3,5)
- Mystery of the Indwelling Christ (Col 1:26)
- Mystery of the Bride of Christ (Eph 5:32)
- Mystery of the Rapture (1 Cor 15:51)
- Mystery of Israel's hardening (Rom 11:25)
- Mystery of Babylon - the interaction between the Antichrist and Babylon (Rev 17:5,7)
- Mystery of Lawlessness (2 Thess 2:7)

- (C) "Scriptures" (16:26b)
- (D) "Command of the eternal God" (16:26c)
- (E) "All the nations" (16:26d)
- (F) "Obedience of faith" (16:26e)

26 but now has been disclosed, and through the **Scriptures** of the **prophets**, in **accordance with the commandment of the eternal God**, has been made known to **all the nations, *leading to obedience of faith***;

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading to obedience of faith*;

26 but now has been made known through the prophets to all the gentiles, in keeping with the decree of the eternal God to bring them to the obedience that springs from faith—

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

- "...Scriptures" - not referring to the OT Scriptures (which is the common interpretation), but the NT Scriptures, which by the time Paul wrote Romans was coming together into a canon

— The NT was the canon that was coming into existence when Paul wrote Romans (Cf. "now" earlier in v26); by the time Christ arrived, the OT canon had been closed for centuries

— Romans is Paul's 6th letter; James & Matthew, in addition to Paul's five other letters, had already been written

- "...prophets" - referring to NT prophets (Cf. Eph 2:20); the "prophets" were the ones, including Paul, who were writing gospels or letters that would in time make up the NT canon

- In 1:1-2 Paul began his letter saying that the gospel that he is preaching was taken from the OT; as Paul is wrapping up his letter, he says that the full dimension of the gospel, the ramifications of the gospel, including the fact that there is no longer a Jew/Gentile distinction, is coming into existence through his writings and the writings of others

— The gospel is predicted in the OT, but explained in the NT

- "...in accordance with the commandment of the eternal God" - the Scripture that we hold and the gospel that we believe came into existence because of the commandment of God, not by human power or will

— The gospel is part of the preordained plan of God from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). Thus, Paul's presentation and explanation of the gospel in Romans is not

an editorial, it's not an opinion piece, it part and parcel of the preordained plan of God that was set in stone prior to the foundation of the world.

- "...all the nations" - God's goal is to make know his pre-existent plan to all the nations, to every person who has ever lived, lives today, or will ever live

- "...leading to obedience of faith" - the gospel is not just about believing in Jesus and getting your fire insurance paid up

— The gospel as Paul has revealed to us is not simply about justification, but also about sanctification, getting one's practice to catch up with their position in daily life

Jesus as the Theme of the Bible (Luke 24:27,44; John 5:39,46)

- Anticipation of Christ (OT)
- Manifestation of Christ (Gospels)
- Explanation of Christ (Epistles)
- Consummation of Christ (Revelation)

(G) Description of God (16:27)

27 to the **only wise God, through Jesus Christ**, be the glory forever. Amen.

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus the Messiah, be glory forever! Amen.

27 To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

- "...only wise God" - divine truth is sourced only in God, not in human philosophy

- "...through Jesus Christ" - the only way to access the truth of the gospel is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5; Cf. Gal 2:20)